

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
RECORDS SERVICES DIVISION

TO : Chief, Records Management Branch, MIS

DATE: 23 March 1954

FROM : Chief, Records Systems Section

SUBJECT: Specifications for File Cabinets

1. As requested in your memorandum of 19 March 1954, I called on the users of the 50 cabinets mentioned by Mr. Leonard as being purchased by this Agency about two years ago. The cabinets were bought by the Index Branch of the Contacts Division, and the supervisor is Mr. [REDACTED] was formerly with Mr. [REDACTED] but has since been reassigned within the Division.

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2. Most of the filing cabinets in the Index Branch are Shaw-Walker. However, since placing the order for the 50 cabinets mentioned by Mr. Leonard, they have had to order some additional cabinets and were supplied with the cabinets established as standard by our Notice. This Branch, therefore, has had experience with both type cabinets and their preference is for the Shaw-Walker. The reason for their preference is as follows:

a. The "dropback" with wobble-blocks provide approximately 3 inches more usable space per drawer. This is accomplished by the "dropback" and the elimination of the usual follow-block.

b. Their experience in active files indicates that the file clerks will not regularly pull the follow-block tight and the folders tend to slide down. If the follow-blocks are used correctly, then additional filing time is required to release them and pull them tight each time. Also, follow-blocks often stick and are difficult to release.

c. Guides attached to guide rods, as in the standard cabinets, keep folders from sliding down. However, the Index Branch does not use guides and therefore they have a problem with sliding folders in using the standard cabinets. The wobble-block in the Shaw-Walker cabinet overcomes this problem.

d. The drawer tracks on the Shaw-Walker cabinets permit the drawer to come completely out of the cabinet, giving free access to the back of the drawer. On the standard cabinets, the drawer remains approximately 2 inches within the cabinet when fully opened.

e. Standard cabinets are approximately 4 inches higher than the Shaw-Walker cabinets, primarily because of the space required for the guide rods. The Index Branch feels that the added height in the standard cabinets is a disadvantage to the women file clerks.

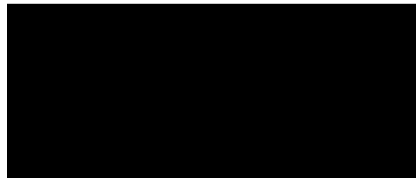
3. Because of the difference in the cabinets as described above, the Index Branch feels that the Shaw-Walker cabinet is much better for their operations. They further state that if unable to justify the procurement of Shaw-Walker cabinets for future requirements, they will attempt to rearrange their material so that the most active material can be placed in the Shaw-Walker cabinets, while the less active material is placed in standard cabinets.

4. My own comments regarding the relative advantages of the two cabinets are as follows:

a. The Shaw-Walker cabinet does have some real advantages over the standard cabinet.

b. The cost of the Shaw-Walker cabinet is greater than the standard cabinet but this is partially offset by the additional usable space. Also, the drawer construction appears to be more simple than that of the standard cabinets, so that it seems likely the cost could be reduced if these cabinets were produced in quantity for Government-wide usage.

c. The guides attached to guide rods, as in the standard cabinet, have two advantages over unattached guides: (1) they cannot be pulled out and misfiled, and (2) they prevent folders from sliding down when the follow-block is loose. In my opinion, reason (1) above is more than offset by the other advantages of the Shaw-Walker cabinet and the wobble-blocks in the Shaw-Walker cabinets are adequate to prevent the folders from sliding down as stated in reason (2).



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